

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A midplane, comprising:  
a printed circuit board;  
a first communication coupling coupled with the  
5 printed circuit board and configured to receive a first  
computing device;  
a second communication coupling coupled with the  
printed circuit board and configured to receive a second  
computing device;  
10 a master signal control module coupled with the  
first and second communication couplings;  
wherein the master signal control module is operable  
to communicate control signals to the second  
communication coupling if the first computing device is  
15 not coupled with the first communication coupling; and  
wherein the master signal control module prevents  
communication of the control signals to the second  
communication coupling if the first computing device is  
not coupled with the first communication coupling.  
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2. The midplane of Claim 1, wherein the first  
communication coupling includes trace wiring at least  
partially embedded within the printed circuit board.
- 25 3. The midplane of Claim 1, wherein the first  
computing device comprises a server processing card.
4. The midplane of Claim 1, wherein the second  
computing device is coupled with a network interface card  
30 operable to couple the first computing device with a  
network.

5. The midplane of Claim 1, wherein the master  
signal control module is operable to communicate the  
control signals to the first communication coupling if  
the first computing device is coupled with the first  
5 communication coupling.

6. The midplane of Claim 1, further comprising:  
a third communication coupling coupled with the  
printed circuit board and configured to receive a third  
10 computing device; and

wherein the master signal control module is operable  
to communicate control signals to the third communication  
coupling if the first and second computing devices are  
not coupled with the first and second communication  
15 couplings, respectively.

7. The midplane of Claim 1, wherein the master  
signal control module is operable to prevent  
communication of the control signals to the third  
20 communication coupling if the first computing device is  
coupled with the first communication coupling or the  
second computing device is coupled with the second  
communication coupling.

25 8. The midplane of Claim 1, wherein the master  
signal control module comprises a plurality of diodes and  
resistors operable to perform logic which determines the  
path of the communication signals.

9. A server chassis, comprising:

a midplane printed circuit board having first and second connectors configured to receive first and second server processing cards, respectively;

5 at least a first server processing card coupled with the first connector;

a master signal control module coupled with the midplane printed circuit board;

10 the master signal control module being operable to communicate control signals to the first server processing card if the second server processing is not coupled with the second connector; and

15 wherein the master signal control module is operable to prevent communication of the control signals to the first server processing card if the second server processing card is coupled with the second connector.

10. A method for controlling a plurality of hardware components, comprising:

monitoring first and second connectors coupled with a midplane to detect the presence of first and second  
5 computing devices, respectively;

transmitting master control signals to the second computing device if the first computing device is not coupled with the first connector; and

preventing the transmission of the master control  
10 signals to the second computing device if the first computing device is coupled with the first connector.

11. The method of Claim 10, further comprising transmitting the master control signals to the first  
15 computing device if the first computing device is coupled with the first connector.

12. The method of Claim 10, further comprising:

monitoring a third connector coupled with the  
20 midplane to detect the presence of a third computing device; and

transmitting the control signals to the third communication device if the first and second computing devices are not coupled with the first and second  
25 connectors, respectively.

13. A computer readable medium encoded with logic operable to:

monitor first and second connector coupled with a midplane to detect the presence of first and second  
5 computing devices, respectively;

transmit master control signals to the second computing device if the first computing device is not coupled with the first connector; and

prevent the transmission of the master control  
10 signals to the second computing device if the first computing device is coupled with the first connector.

14. The computer readable medium of Claim 13, wherein the logic is further operable to transmit the  
15 master control signals to the first computing device if the first computing device is coupled with the first connector.

15. The computer readable medium of Claim 13, wherein the logic is further operable to:

monitor a third connector coupled with the midplane to detect the presence of a third computing device; and

transmit the control signals to the third communication device if the first and second computing  
25 devices are not coupled with the first and second connectors, respectively.

16. A system, comprising:

means for monitoring first and second connectors coupled with a midplane to detect the presence of first and second computing devices, respectively;

5 means for transmitting master control signals to the second computing device if the first computing device is not coupled with the first connector; and

means for preventing the transmission of the master control signals to the second computing device if the  
10 first computing device is coupled with the first connector.

17. The system of Claim 16, further comprising transmitting the master control signals to the first  
15 computing device if the first computing device is coupled with the first connector.

18. The system of Claim 16, further comprising:

monitoring a third connector coupled with the  
20 midplane to detect the presence of a third computing device; and

transmitting the control signals to the third communication device if the first and second computing devices are not coupled with the first and second  
25 connectors, respectively.